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DON'T LET THE FLU PUT A SCARE INTO YOU

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While ghosts and goblins are preparing to send a chill up your spine, you can take steps to protect yourself from something that will literally give you the chills – and a fever, body aches and potentially pneumonia. It's time to think about flu season and your annual vaccine for protection against a virus that can mean lost days of work and school later.

The Florida Department of Health urges flu vaccinations for all Floridians older than six months to get their vaccinations before Halloween on Oct. 31. While Florida's flu season peaks in the early months of the year, early vaccination ensures protection during the holiday season when many gather for celebrations and family events.

To ensure you have your shot in time so you can focus on tricks and treats, the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County will be hosting its Sixth Annual Flu Boo. This year, it will be at a new location and time:

**John Hopkins Middle School
701 16th Street S. in St. Petersburg
Saturday, Oct. 26 from 9 a.m. until noon**

Participants will not only be eligible to receive free flu shots, but there will be crafts and candy, the opportunity to receive free Hepatitis A shots and plenty of patient educational information.

In addition to taking precautions such as proper handwashing and sanitizing frequently-handled surfaces, it's important to avoid the flu by getting the seasonal flu vaccine each autumn. Flu strains change from year to year so a new vaccine is needed at the start of each season. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop protection against the flu.

No, you cannot catch the flu from the flu shot. The viruses used to make the vaccine are dead, and incapable of causing the illness. While certain people may feel a tired and achy the day after the shot, that is a normal response as the immune system develops antibodies. Those symptoms pale in comparison to the high fever, body aches and other symptoms a full-blown case of the flu can bring.

For more information about the Flu Boo or how to get a flu vaccine at DOH Pinellas, call (727) 824-6900 or visit www.FluFreeFlorida.com.

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About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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